

People who live in areas experiencing cold weather and winter storms need to take extra precautions to keep their animals safe. Pets left to fend for themselves in cold weather are susceptible to injury and death. Here are some simple tips from American Humane:

Be Prepared

- Plan ahead and pay attention to cold-weather warnings.
- Unless significant power outages are experienced, most cold-weather episodes and winter storms are “shelter in place” events, so pet care needs should be planned for in the home. Keep your pet preparedness kit well-stocked and ready — in a winter storm, you may not be able to leave your home for several days.
- Leave your pets’ coats a little longer in the winter to provide more warmth. That summer “short cut” from your groomer should be avoided during cold weather. If you have short-haired breeds, consider getting them a coat or sweater that covers them from neck to tail and around the abdomen.

Winter Pet Care

- When you bathe your dogs in cold weather, make sure they are completely dry before taking them outside for a romp or walk.
- When walking your dogs during bad weather, keep them on leash. It’s easier for a dog to become lost in winter storm conditions — more dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season. (And don’t forget to microchip and put ID tags on your dogs and cats!)
- Leash your pets if you have frozen ponds, lakes or rivers nearby, as loose pets can break through ice and quickly succumb to hypothermia before trained ice-rescue personnel can arrive. Never try an ice rescue of a pet yourself — leave that to trained professionals.
- When you are working on housebreaking your new puppy, remember that puppies are more susceptible to cold than are adult dogs. In cold conditions or bad weather, you may need to opt for paper training your new pet rather than taking the pup outside.
- Keep your pets inside, both during the day and night. Just because they have fur doesn’t mean they can withstand cold temperatures.
- If dogs are left outside, they should have a draft-free shelter large enough to stand and turn around in, yet small enough to retain body heat. Use a layer of straw or other

bedding material to help insulate them against the cold. Make sure the entrance to the shelter faces away from the direction of incoming wind and snow.

- Keep your cats indoors. Cats can freeze in cold weather without shelter. Sometimes cats left outdoors in cold weather seek shelter and heat under the hoods of automobiles and are injured or killed when the ignition is turned on. Banging loudly on the hood of your car a few times before starting the engine will help avoid a tragic situation. (This is true for wild animals in cold weather as well).
- When taking your pets out for a bathroom break, stay with them. If it's too cold for you to stand outside, it is probably also too cold for your pets.

Courtesy of American Humane

Some signs to lookout for the well being of your dog during the cold weather months. **Again, if you know you are going to a place where dogs are not allowed, then *leave them at home!!***

- Increased heart rate, followed by a slow heart rate
- Rapid breathing, followed by progressively slower and shallower breath
- Sluggishness and delayed reflexes
- Depression
- Paleness
- Dilated pupils
- Loss of consciousness